

Planning for a Successful Surgical Outcome



Dennis Brown, MD, has been a general surgeon at Crouse Hospital for 35 years. In 2008, he was named Senior Surgical Quality Director to lead the hospital's efforts to enhance surgical outcomes for patients.

Are you or a family member facing surgery? Have you ever wondered what you would do if you needed surgery? Most operations are not emergencies and are considered elective surgery. According to general surgeon Dennis Brown, MD, some simple tips and information can help you and your physician achieve a successful surgical outcome.

“As a patient, you are the center of your healthcare team.”

—DENNIS BROWN, MD

“It starts with asking some simple but important questions,” says Dr. Brown. “As a patient, you are the center of your healthcare team. Don’t ever be shy about asking your doctor to explain a procedure that you don’t understand or to provide more information if you’re still unclear about something.”

Dr. Brown adds that just as your physician has a responsibility to provide information about your procedure, you as a patient also have responsibilities. “Surgery goes two ways,” says Dr. Brown. “We ask that patients help us ensure the best possible outcome by being as prepared as possible, and by doing some simple things like keeping a list of medications they’re taking.”



Physician Discussion

Before Surgery

- What is the name of the operation?
- What’s going to happen? What are the expected results?
- Are there any alternative treatments?
- What are the benefits? What are the risks?
- What will be done to manage your pain after the operation?
- What type of anesthesia will you receive?
- What type of safety procedures are in place at the hospital?

After Surgery

- How long will you be in the hospital?
- How much help will you need when you go home?
- What is the expected recovery time?
- How long will it take until you’ll be able to resume full activities of daily life (including getting back to work)?

Financial Questions

- What does the operation cost?
- Are there any anticipated costs not covered by insurance?

Patient Responsibilities

Medications

Write down a list of all your medications. This should include medication name, dose and how often you take it. Be sure to include all medications ordered by your physician(s), over-the-counter medications and herbal preparations.

Diabetes

For most people with diabetes, the recommendations state your blood sugar should be in the range of 70-130 before meals and never any higher than 180, even after you’ve

eaten. Your surgery may be cancelled if your readings are outside these ranges.

Smoking

STOP SMOKING! Many post-operative complications can be prevented when lungs function normally. Your healthcare team will ask you to breathe deeply and cough after your operation. You’ll be able to do this easier and more effectively if you don’t smoke.

A Note About HIPAA

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliance is a very important part of surgical care. Patients must specify the individual(s) they wish to have their personal healthcare information released to. This information can include biopsy results, reports and surgical findings. Hospital staff cannot — and will not — release any patient information to another individual unless that person has been designated by the patient and is listed on the patient’s HIPAA consent form.

Your Healthcare Team’s Responsibilities

- ✓ Answer your questions promptly.
- ✓ Teach you to cough and breathe deeply.
- ✓ Help you get out of bed to prevent complications.
- ✓ Give you medication (Heparin, Arixtra, Lovenox) to prevent blood clots.
- ✓ Monitor and manage your blood glucose.
- ✓ Monitor and manage your pain.
- ✓ Coordinate your discharge from the hospital.